



# SUFFOLK COUNTY

## Soil & Water Conservation District

—2021—

### Year In Review

#### Looking Back on 2021

Corey Humphrey, C.P.E.S.C. – District Manager

2021 was a rollercoaster of year for the SCSWCD, but I am proud to say that we overcame the unexpected challenges thrown our way and continued to provide the services that the residents of Suffolk County have come to expect from their Soil and Water Conservation District. At the start of the year the SCSWCD was temporarily shut down and staff were all reassigned to assist the Suffolk County Department of Health's response to the COVID pandemic. Both technical staff members and administrators worked tirelessly as Case Investigators and 311 Call Center operators to help stop the spread of the virus that was wreaking havoc on our community. As the infection rates began to decline in the spring of 2021, staff were relieved of their COVID related duties and returned to the SCSWCD to pick up the pieces from where we abruptly left them back in November 2020. This included amending several contracts, catching up on missed field work and reprioritizing our efforts to ensure that our programs are available to the public that rely on them. I must commend Susan, Ed, Kaitlin and Ann Marie for their teamwork and professionalism, without their dedication the SCSWCD would not have been able to get back on track.

During this time the SCSWCD Staff not only continued to keep the District afloat, but also secured funding for a number of projects and programs including NYS Agriculture Environmental Management, NYS Agricultural Non-Point Source, Agriculture in the Classroom and our Soil Health Program. In addition, staff continued to foster new partnerships with regional entities such as Peconic Land Trust, Peconic Estuary Partnership and the South Shore Estuary Reserve. A true testament to the capabilities and perseverance of the SCSWCD team to protect natural resources here in Suffolk County.

I am excited to announce that in 2022 the SCSWCD will be expanding our team and hiring a new Soil District Technician to assist the SCSWCD carry out our programs. The position will be announced at the start of 2022 with the incumbent starting shortly thereafter. Expanding the staffing levels of the SCSWCD is just one example of Suffolk County's commitment to the protection, preservation and enhancement of the natural resources in our communities. We look forward to continuing to work in conjunction with our partners to provide the level of technical assistance that the residents of Suffolk have come to expect. It is our goal to support regional conservation efforts and furthering the stewardship goals of the residents of Suffolk County. I am very proud of all the work we have done to date and excited to continue to build upon this momentum in 2022.

For more information about the District, or to sign-up for our programs please check out our website or call the SWCD staff at (631) 852-3285.

I wish everyone a healthy and happy Holiday Season and look forward to continuing the great work of the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2022.

#### **Board of Directors**

Robert Carpenter  
Chairperson

Phil Schmitt  
Director  
Farmer

Al Krupski  
Director  
Legislator

Brian Culhane  
Director  
Member At Large

Robert Calarco  
Director  
Legislator

#### **District Staff**

Corey Humphrey  
District Manager

Susan Odell-Pepe  
Principal Account Clerk

Ann Marie Calabro  
Agronomist

Kaitlin R. Shahinian  
Soil District Technician

Edward Compagnone  
Soil District  
Technician

#### **USDA-FSA Staff**

Joanna Pontino  
Program Technician

#### **USDA-NRCS Staff**

Liz Camps  
District Conservationist

John GianLombardo  
Program Support  
Specialist



## District services provided...

### Agriculture

- Engineering Practices
- Irrigation Design
- Agricultural Environment Management
- Ag. Value Assessment
- Agronomic Practices
- Erosion Control
- Conservation Planning
- Cost-Share Programs
- Transition to Organic Farming
- Technical Assistance
- Practice, Design & Installation Supervision
- Drainage Systems
- Agricultural Waste Systems

### Landowners

- Bluff Shoreline Erosion Recommendations
- Conservation Information
- Educational Materials
- Invasive Species Management
- Pond Assistance
- Sediment & Erosion Control
- Soils Information
- Habitat and Restoration
- Wildlife Management

### Education

- Conservation Materials
- Program Guides

### Municipalities

- Nonpoint Source Pollution
- Site Plan & Subdivision Reviews
- Grant Partnerships
- Watershed Management

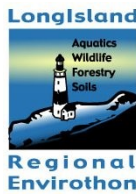
### Environmental Consultants

- Natural Resource Maps
- Aerial Photos



Bluff erosion site on the LI Sound with exposed soils and lateral seepage

## 2021 Long Island Regional Envirothon



The 2021 Long Island Regional Envirothon was held virtually this year and while the event did not take place in-person, it was a success for those students who participated!

The Long Island Regional Envirothon is an annual environmental competition event for Nassau and Suffolk County high school students to participate in. Students test their knowledge in 5 environmental topics and get the opportunity to interact with other high school students, as well as professionals working in the field. Winners of the Envirothon go on to the State event and compete for the chance to make it to the National event. As 2022 quickly approaches, the Suffolk SWCD is continuously working with the Nassau SWCD and other program partners to coordinate the next year's event...which will be in-person again!

For more information on the Envirothon;  
please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)

## Fuel Tank Replacement Program

District staff has been working with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) to inspect new and existing agriculture fuel tanks throughout the county. The Fuel Tank Replacement Program is a cost-share program to help growers replace outdated agricultural fuel tanks with new, more efficient, regulated fuel tanks. These new tanks must follow USDA-NRCS regulations and pass SCDHS inspections.



Suffolk County passed legislation to encourage ag producers to make this transition to upgrade qualifying tanks as a means to protect essential groundwater supplies from being potentially contaminated by old and/or unregulated tanks. There are currently 70 growers participating in the program who are in the process of upgrading their fuel tank(s).

For more information on the Fuel Tank Program;  
please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)

## AEM Implementation Program

Agricultural Environmental Management, or AEM, is a conservation planning program that provides one-on-one help to farmers to identify environmental risks on their farms. Once these risks are identified, farmers can receive help with solution planning, design, and with obtaining financial assistance to address existing problems and prevent future ones. AEM is a voluntary and confidential program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving Long Island and New York State's natural resources.

By participating in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, our food systems, the economy, and the environment. AEM Base Year 17's Annual Action Plan includes \$100,000 for Implementation projects to farms, \$10,000 for testing services provided by the district (for soil, water, compost, and manure), and \$180,000 reimbursement in Technical Assistance totaling \$290,000.00. We are excited to again administer this program for Suffolk's Agriculture Community and thank NYS for their commitment to supporting on-the-ground conservation.

For more information about how to qualify and/or to learn about the AEM Conservation Planning Process;  
please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)



## Agriculture in the Classroom



This past year marks the fifth year that the Ag in the Classroom Program has been facilitated. Despite the many challenges both the District and schools faced with delays, supply shortages, and following proper CDC guidelines, five schools were selected for their innovative projects. This year's school projects range from constructing high tunnels and hoop houses, to creating hydroponic systems in classrooms, to building Pollinator Habitats and installing irrigation systems. From 2017-2021, the District has helped fund 26 school projects that focus on agriculture education for students who may not have previous learning opportunities with indoor and outdoor agriculture. Many of the projects incorporate lesson plans between multiple CORE and Elective classes, as well as after school clubs and programs to engage students in the project in multiple ways!



For more information about the Ag in the Classroom Program; please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)

## Soil Health Programs

### Soil Health Testing Program:

This year, SWCD and CCE were able to collect 43 soil samples from 17 Suffolk County farms to analyze the physical and biological components of their soil. We collaborate with Ag Stewardship Program from Suffolk CCE and work with interested growers to determine which fields should be tested, a brief history of past field-use, and what their soil health goals are. In the past 4 years we've served approximately 80 growers by analyzing their soils, discussing their lab results, and provide suggestions on what soil health BMPs could be implemented.



### Soil Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP):



Another busy year of loaning our soil health, conservation-based equipment out to growers! We have several varieties of compost/mulch spreaders, as well as a few reduced/minimal tillage such as zonebuilder subsoilers and a no-till drill. With 14 growers utilizing the 7 pieces of equipment this year, it's another successful season. This year alone, between all the pieces of equipment, the equipment has been utilized on approximately 300 acres of ag land. We are always looking on ways to expand and improve the program.

For more information about either Soil Health Programs; please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)

## Stormwater Remediation of Richmond Creek

Several years ago, the District was awarded funds through NYSDEC's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to implement a stormwater remediation project with the Town of Southold. Staff turn overs, contract delays, and a global pandemic delayed the initial construction of the project. These setbacks allowed TOS to update the project design to improve the efficiency of the drainage structures, and expand the scope of work to include additional sites—within the watershed—with similar drainage issues. The project was successfully completed in fall '21 and as a result the creek no longer receives stormwater runoff discharge from Town-owned roadways.

For more information about this project; please call (631) 852-3285 or visit: [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org)



## **COMMITTEES**

- Cornell University's Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center - Advisory Council
- Environmental Education Foundation of Soil & Water Districts
- Long Island Agricultural Stewardship Working Group
- Long Island Ag. Forum Planning Committee
- Long Island Commission on Aquifer Protection
- Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan
- Long Island Regional Envirothon
- New York Association of Conservation Districts
- NYS Conservation District Employees Association
- New York State Envirothon
- North Shore Coastal Erosion Control Taskforce
- Peconic Estuary Partnership Management Committee
- Peconic Estuary Partnership Technical Advisory Committee
- South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee
- Suffolk County Ag. Stewardship Program
- Suffolk County Department of Health Services Peconic River Project
- Suffolk County Land & Water Invasive Species Advisory Board

## **Accompsett Middle School Pollinator Habitat Planting**

This past spring, we helped students and teachers from Accomsett Middle School plant their Pollinator Habitat Garden. The project was awarded by the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP), a collaboration of multiple partnering agencies and stakeholders focused on reducing nitrogen load.



## District Celebrations!

There were so many achievements from this past year for everyone on staff, but a special, newsletter-worthy 'Congratulations' in order for two District staff members for personal milestones with their families.

### *Baby Fever-*

In August, Corey, his wife, and son welcomed the newest addition to their growing family! Their daughter, Layla, is healthy and doing great, and their son, Quinn, is learning how to be a great big brother!

### *Wedding Bells-*

In October, Kaitlin, got married, surrounded by loving family and friends! Kaitlin and her partner, Nick, have been together for nearly 10 years, and now that the wedding is over, they can get back to fixing up their dream home.

## We're on Instagram!

The District has been using Instagram as an outlet to interact with the public and provide some education and outreach on the programs we facilitate at the District. We also use our account to provide environmental education and awareness and promote District run programs and projects, and workshops with partnering agencies like USDA-NRCS and SC CCE and others!

**Follow us:** @suffolk\_swcd

## Some of Our Favorite Photos From This Past Year



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• [www.suffolkswcd.org](http://www.suffolkswcd.org) •